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U.S., China, Russia

A Strange Triangle

*Peking an Aggrieved Spouse Betrayed
By Moscow's Relations With Us,
But Is It a Lasting Affair?*

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IF THE STATE DEPARTMENT had consciously set out seven years ago with a Machiavellian plan to separate Russia and China, it could not have played its cards better than it did. Not only did Washington not set out to do this, but its top officials recognized the very existence of the Sino-Soviet conflict only belatedly, then were extremely cautious about acknowledging it and even at this late date have consciously done little to exacerbate it.

Until quite recently, it was a common belief in Washington that any attempt to "intervene" in the Sino-Soviet dispute might harm our interests by bringing the two Communist powers back together. It will surely be one of history's finest ironies that the power which had the greatest interest in, and played the crucial role in, splitting Russia from China was innocent of its own deep involvement.

It is, of course, true that at the lower levels of government, both in the State Department and throughout the intelligence community, there were a number of analysts who recognized the earliest symptoms of conflict between Russia and China.

But it took a long time before this analysis was taken seriously at the top levels of government. As late as April, 1960, Secretary of State Herter publicly announced that it was too early to tell whether the differences between Moscow and Peking were real or significant. Even as late as 1962, one of the assumptions in the American support of the Government of China was that the Russians were capable of restraining China in Southeast Asia.

MOREOVER, even among the analysts who followed the development of the Sino-Soviet dispute closely from its inception, myself included, there was almost a complete lack of awareness of the extent to which American policy had been a causal factor in bringing the rift about. The reason for this, I believe, was the collective failure of Government analysts, officials and academic specialists alike to appreciate the enormous impact our own policies have on the Communist world.

With the aid of hindsight, a longer time perspective and some new information released by both Moscow and Peking in the course of their bitter polemics, we are now in a better position to understand our own role in fostering the Communist schism.

The first point to make is that the United States has inescapably been a silent, if largely unwitting, participant in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The Russian-American-Chinese relationship is a triangle in which a change in the relationship of any two of the powers unavoidably affects the third. Moscow's improved relationship with Washington has in fact been one of the key factors leading to the serious deterioration in Moscow's relations with Peking.

Indeed, since 1959, Moscow has been caught between Peking and Washington. If it moved closer to the Peking line on global strategy, it increased tension with the United States. If Moscow moved to ease tension with Washington, it did so only at the cost of increased conflict with Communist China. That is why, when the Russians finally agreed to sign the nuclear test ban agreement last year, Moscow and Peking came to the brink of a final rupture.

IN SOME RESPECTS, the relationship among the three powers strongly resembles a lovers' triangle in which Peking plays the part of the aggrieved

spouse betrayed by Moscow's "liaison" with Washington. What makes this betrayal all the more unbearable to Peking is not only the fact that the third party is an infidel but, more important, that it is Peking's principal national enemy. It is as though Josephine had been seduced away from Napoleon by Wellington.

Let us begin examining this triangle by contrasting the Chinese-American with the Soviet-American relationship. The first point to understand is that Peking's hostility toward the United States is more deeply rooted than Moscow's. Of the many changing and contradictory elements in Peking's foreign policy since 1957, one of them has remained constant, namely that the United States is the main enemy of all "peace-loving" forces throughout the world and that a world-wide united front must be formed against it.

All other elements in Peking's global strategy are deduced from this basic anti-American line. Since Peking is too weak to engage the United States directly and, optimally, to remove it from Asia, it sponsors "liberation wars," for example, to weaken the United States indirectly by forcing it to disperse its forces throughout the underdeveloped areas and ultimately to bleed it to death.

The main reason for Red China's intense hostility toward the United States is that the U.S. protects and supports an alternative Chinese regime a scant 100 miles off the coast of China which proclaims its intention to reconquer the mainland.

Despite disavowals from the United States that it would support a Nationalist invasion, there are clearly some circumstances in which such support would have to be considered, namely, an invasion which met with a widespread uprising in the mainland. From the Chinese Communist point of view, this would be the worst of all possible con-

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